

This is Bilk # 55, September 1993 - Editor: Ulrich Magin, Hohenheimer Straße 60, 73770 Denkendorf, Germany. Subs are DM 15 for Germany and Europe and DM 20 for the rest of the globe. Sorry, but I cannot accept cheques drawn in foreign currency.

BEHEMOTH

● Loch Ness: On June 22, Edna MacInnes was driving with her boyfriend David MacKay and their 16-month-old baby along the A82 on the north side of the Loch. Close to Abriachan, they spotted a curious shape in the water. "It was light brown in colour", she later told the Inverness Courier (25 June, credit: Andreas Trottmann). "It had a massive white trail behind it. It looked like a boat, but this was no boat, no log, no person - this was the real thing." The couple raced to Culduthel, 7 miles away, and returned to Dores Bay, where they had seen the monster was heading to. Edna ran to the shore, and saw and photographed the creature. Edna: "Suddenly I saw this giraffe-like head and neck rise from the water - it was only 20ft from the shore but along the coast a wee bit from us. I shouted to Dave 'There's the head', and as he clicked the shutter it went down. I'm glad it didn't appear out of the water just beside us because at the time I was feeling a bit scared". Ms MacInnes thought the creature was at least 25 ft long. She said she had been a sceptic before, but was completely convinced now. The photo, alas, only shows a long wake. Betty Gallagher, curator of the Loch Ness Exhibition Centre said the girl "obviously had a fascinating experience". In the Inverness Courier of June 29 (credit: Andreas Trottmann) we learn Ms MacInnes could be eligible for the £ 1000 prize offered by bookmakers William Hill for the best annual sighting. Double luck for the lady.

Although it appears the photos show nothing really unusual, this sighting seems to be the best for years: a close-up of a real animal, no wake or indistinct shadow. The German press, which usually will not carry Nessie sightings, had small articles about this one. The Rheinpfalz carried a dpa-report on the sighting, while several other newspapers had short stories on a new Loch Ness study from dpa, which referred to the MacInnes-sighting: The Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, June 29, p.11; the Frankfurter Rundschau, June 29, p.1; the Basler Zeitung had the sighting report (June 25). The Eßlinger Zeitung had the report on the expedition, adding "an old lady recently saw the creature" - obviously a mistake for the Edna MacInnes sighting (June 29, p.12). The dpa-report from the various papers of June 29 referred to a group of scientists from Britain, consisting of members of the British Museum and a society for limnology, who for 4 weeks attempted to study the wildlife in Loch Ness. They also want to study the layers of sediment at the Loch bottom, and use computer technology to study any "unusual phenomena" they might encounter. More on this project, "Discovery Loch Ness", was in the Inverness Courier (June 15, credit: A Trottmann). It said the project was jointly carried out by Discovery Channel, and Project Urquhart. The Freshwater Biological Association and the Natural History Museum on their research vessel Calanus will survey life forms in the loch in July. Sonar will be provided by Simrad, they will also use high-definition video cameras, and remote controlled-underwater vehicles. Prof Gwynfryn Jones, scientific director of Project Urquhart: "This promises to be of the most important scientific studies to be carried out in a British lake in recent years." I have not yet heard of any results. More on Project Urquhart can be found in Nessletter 113, June 1993.

● Loch Ness clips: Andreas Trottmann has sent me two more clips from the Inverness Courier, they are more "funny bits": In a report on the new expedition (July 2), we see a photo of veteran researcher Ivor Newby in his amphibicar on the Loch, on June 8, the Courier had an interesting photo of a Nessie model that was driven along the shore from Drumnadrochit to Fort Augustus. Interestingly enough, the model monster has a very giraffe-like head. Did this model influence Edna MacInnes perception - did she expect to see something like this in the Loch? The new German Magazin für Grenzwissenschaften, 3/1993, had a report on Operation Deep Scan (1987); the INFO Journal 68, p.28, on last year's expedition.

● Bibliography: INFO Journal 69, p.28 - 1886 sightings of a monster in Elizabeth Lake, California. INFO 68, p.26 - caiman captured in Cottage Lake, Washington.

ISIS

● Orkney mermaid: The Inverness Courier, in its 100 years ago-section on June 29, recalled the episode of a mermaid spotted near Deerness. Two creatures could be observed, a young one, white, which swims by throwing the arms in front of the head and bringing them in towards the side. Naturalists supposed the mermaids were a race species of seals, but locals said they knew seals, and they were none, as they didn't bask.

The mermaids were regular visitors, only the year before (ie 1892) there had been an attempt to shoot them, but it failed. A strange story, this one. I have an extensive file on mermaid sightings, and think they have been seen almost as often as marine sea-serpents. (Credit: A Trottmann)

● Reflections: In Bilk 31, I quoted from TS Eliot's poem The Dry Salvages. He expressed the feeling of ancient people that a river is a "strong brown god". In an article on the disastrous floods of the Mississippi River in July, in the Welt (July 10, p.1) we learn the angry locals now call the river "the brown monster"! This is the way water monster legends started. A silly article on the origin of life in the German tabloid Bild (July 10, p.10) the author retells the Greek legend of the birth of Aphrodite. The sky god Uranos' penis was cut off by Kronos and fell into the sea, where it started to foam and changed into Aphrodite. I remember the story about the penis was ashore in Australia from Bilk 52. In Independent Science, a German Ancient Astronauts (issue 3/93) we learn that Dogon, the mermaids and other marine gods are actually aliens from other planets.

LEVIATHAN

● Illustrierte Wissenschaft, a new German science monthly, in the July 93 edition, had a short piece on "globs". They refer to three different kinds of strange marine monsters, the glob-like creatures found at St Augustine, Florida in 1896, and the 1960 Tasmanian monsters; second: the plesiosaurs found in 1977 at New Zealand and in 1934 at Cherbourg (it is correctly pointed out these were basking sharks); as a third kind of monster, they refer to the Gambian sea serpent described by Karl Shuker. Also the popular science monthly PM has a special edition, "Geheimnisse des Meeres" which has a chapter on sea serpents. Petra Deimer, a German whale specialist, says they have been explained already: sea serpents are only parts of giant squid's arms.

USOS: ● Did a UFO crash into the sea at Moriches Bay, Long Island, New York? The stories, as reproduced in the Magazin für Grenzwissenschaften, 1/93, p.28, seems to be the usual ufological mixture between rumour and gullibility. ● Ufos fall into Indian Ocean - see Magazin für Grenzwissenschaften 2/93, p.67 ● A meteorite fell into the sea off Denmark on July 19. The sonic boom could be heard all over Jutland, and many witnesses saw a red streak cross the night sky (Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, July 21, p.7). ● In my new book, Trolle Yetis Tatzelwürmer, I described two CE IIIs where mermaid-like humanoids were seen in Germany. In the Journal für UFO-Forschung, 3/1993, p. 71, R Henke interprets the Langenargen, Lake Constance case as a delirium tremens (the witness was an alcoholic and drug addict!); while the "fishmen" observed in a UFO over Nördling are dealt with in detail by Hans van Kampen: De Gezanten van Hyperion, Paravisie 1992 (a book in Dutch).

DISCOVERIES: ● The oldest remains of a polar bear have been discovered in a cave at Kjoepsvik, Norway. They are supposedly 55 000 years old (Rheinpfalz, 29 May) ● The Vu-Quang animal recently discovered in Vietnam (see last Bilk and all major fortune magazines) has been reconstructed from several skins and bones. The Spiegel (14 June, p.219) has a photo of this remarkable animal. ● Again in Vietnam, scientists have rediscovered a dozen Java rhinos. They had been believed extinct since the 1960s. Prof Vo Quy from Hanoi University declared it was the last rhino population of the whole of Indochina (Stuttgarter Zeitung, 23 June, p.15) ● A new people, the nomadic Liawep, has been discovered in New Guinea. The 79 members are naked and pray to a stone statue. Papuan New Guinean officials declared the Liawep have not been in contact with westerners before (Frankfurter Allgemeine & Rheinpfalz, 26 June). ● After 160 years, beavers have again settled in the delta of the Rhine. About 60 now form a breeding colony, it is supposed they came from eastern Europe (Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 29 June, p.11). ● Dinosaurs may have survived longer at the south pole than at any other place on earth, P Vickers-Rich & T H Rich suggest in the Scientific American, July 93, p. 50. These dinos survived arctic winter, were warm-blooded and had large eyes. There is also evidence that plesiosaurs became landlocked and adapted to freshwater - in cold lakes!

CORRECTIONS: ● In Bilk # 53, read Budd instead of Bob Hopkins. ● In Bilk # 54, read Hudson River, not East River. ● Bilk # 53, quote from LeBlond in Leviathan section was from Nessletter 112.

MARINE LIFE: ● Beluga whale in the mouth of the Elbe River (Sonntag Aktuell, July 18). ● Possible discovery of coelacanth scales in the Gulf of Mexico: Science & Vie, August 1993, p.17-18 (credit: Michel Raynal) ● Dolphin stranded at Heiligenhafen near Kiel in the Baltic (Stuttgarter Zeitung, July 1, p.21)